

In Which the Demogorgan Gets Rekt by the-singular-peep

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Summary: It had been a week and a half since Eleven had been out of hiding to the boys, and she couldn't be any happier to be granted access to her friends again. Well, maybe she could be if she wasn't bed ridden. Or, El gets to feeling a little down and the boys do their best to cheer her up. [IN WHICH EVERYTHING IS OKAY SERIES. COMPLETE. PART 5/?. PT4: "IN WHICH EVERYTHING IS OKAY."]

In Which the Demogorgan Gets Rekt

In Which the Demogorgan Gets Rekt; [In Which Everything is Okay, pt 5/?]

November 17, 1984. Thursday.

It had been a week and a half since Eleven had been out of hiding to the boys, and she couldn't be any happier to be granted access to her friends again.

Well, maybe she could be if she wasn't bed ridden.

Eleven had spent the early part of the week sleeping and nothing more. The sheer exhaustion of using her powers that much had left her drained and feverish, and Hopper even had to carry her from the Byers' because her legs wouldn't seem to work. But that was okay, because Hopper had been taking off work early to care for her, and when he couldn't be there, Joyce Byers would bring her own child over and would watch both ill children herself. (Will was still recovering, too, and even if he was technically capable of taking care of himself at this point, Joyce was in no way ready to leave him alone again.)

It had been a week and a half, and Eleven had spent the whole time without seeing Mike, instead listening to Joyce read her *Anne of Green Gables* and getting to know Will without the other boys around. It was surprising to Eleven to remember that she hadn't really *met* Will before. Having heard so much about him and reached out to him so many times, she felt like she had. But on Tuesday, when Hopper had gone into work and left Eleven with a kiss on the forehead, a command to be good, and Joyce Byers, Will had come into Eleven's room from his normal place on their couch when his mother went to fetch the thermometer.

"Hi." He said softly, offering El a smile as he tugged his blanket around his shoulders. El noted the way his sunken in eyes sparkled at the greeting and could tell he was genuine. "I don't think we've really talked before. I'm Will, but.. you know that."

Eleven smiled at him, a small, thin smile, but a smile none-the-less.

"Can I sit?" He said then, gesturing to an empty place on her bed. She nodded slightly and he sat.

"I, uhm.. I really appreciate everything you did for me. That was really cool."

Eleven cocked her head.

"Cool?" She said, her voice extremely hoarse. Will nodded.

"Cool. Like... It was really nice of you. Thanks."

Eleven smiled. She knew what Nice was. Nice was Hopper when he helped her get into pajamas when she was too weak to work the buttons on her jacket after That Night. Nice was Joyce when she held her and cradled her in the Bath at the school last year. Nice was Will, talking to her and trying to make her feel not-lonely right now after being cooped up in her room for a week.

The two had bonded over being sick together, and soon enough Will was coming into her room every day. Sometimes they even napped side-by-side, not intending to but just succumbing to fever at the same time and laying where they fell. The bond they had was different than what El had with Mike - but not in a bad way. She thought of the way Mike talked to Nancy or how they looked at baby Holly in the photos. *Siblings*, she thought, the word coming briefly to the back of her mind whenever she thought of Will.

Having Will over helped Eleven start to feel better, and the same was true for Will, too. He loved spending time at the Hopper residence - with all his friends and his brother going to school like normal, it would get lonely just him and his mom.

On a Friday, when Will walked into El's room as Hopper was leaving, Eleven felt a pang of sadness in her heart. The sunken in look of his eyes had decreased greatly, and his cheeks were a little rounder. He was more colorful, with rosy cheeks and skin a pale shade of peach rather than a gray-blue color. He looked alive and well, and, while El was happy for him, she was also upset. From what Will had told her,

alive and well meant you could go to school. Alive and well meant that soon she would be left alone again, just her and , or worse, just her and the house, waiting for Hopper to get home.

El was recovering, too, but at a much slower pace than her friend. Will had the advantage of a strong immune system, having been exposed to so many illnesses as a child, and, even after his body was thrown for a loop by the Mind Flayer, was able to back on his feet quickly. El, on the other hand, had never been exposed to illness before. In the lab, there were always shots, and sterile walls, and medical masks. At home, in Hopper's home, she was always alone and not out in the world contracting germs. There had been a grand total of two times she had gotten sick at home, and, while both times had been doozies, that was it. The amount of stress her body was put under after closing the gate paired with being around the boys and cold air that evening was just too much for her body to handle, and now she was going on eight days with a fever never reaching below 99.7 degrees farenheight.

The first three days - the days before Will had been well enough to venture into her room, the days before Hopper was even emotionally ready to leave home - were miserable. She was in and out of consciousness, and all she had was the hazy memory of frantic voices and cold wash-cloths and Hopper holding her hand in her sleep. Of being wheedled to eat soup and apple sauce and of coughing it right back up. Of lack of appetite and being told to drink a weird liquid called 'Gatorade' because it would make her feel better. Those three days were awful, but she would still pick those days over her time being 'alive and well' in the lab.

Now it was day eleven, and El finally had the strength to sit up in bed and could eat an entire bowl of chicken and stars and only took four naps a day instead of twelve. And Will had stayed home one last day, just for good measure, and was going to go back to school on Monday.

And then Eleven would be alone.

The two were sitting, El on the bed and Will in his designated 'reading chair' reading her a book called *Lord of the Rings*, when there was a knock at her door.

"Hey you two," Joyce had said softly, cracking the door a centimeter. "You have company."

Will brightened as the door opened the rest of the way, and Eleven gasped.

"Hey!" Will grinned, standing slowly as to not get light headed. "I've missed you guys!"

"Missed you too, buddy!" Dustin grinned, pulling Will into a 'manly' hug and patting his shoulder.

"Mike..." El whispered as she looked around for the tallest boy. Among the group was Max, the girl Eleven still hadn't officially met, but no Mike. Max could sense the unease from the smaller girl and took Lucas's hand.

"He's got detention. We were playing Go Fish in study hall and he flipped a table. He'll be by later, though. He's pretty pissed to be missing seeing his girlfriend for the first time in a week." She said, offering a smile. Eleven wrinkled her nose, still unsure if she liked this girl, but happy to know that Mike would be by soon. She settled against the backboard and sighed, and the group that had entered sat in various places around the room, Will returning to his chair at the bedside. Dustin came and plopped down next to Eleven.

"I've missed ya, El. How do you feel?"

The girl shrugged, eyes downcast. She didn't feel well at all, but she could lift her head, which was more than she could say at the beginning. Did that mean she was doing well?

"Okay." She mumbled, not meeting his eyes. He didn't seem to mind, but he did seem concerned.

"Were you, like, this drained last time? Like when you shattered into a hundred million tiny pieces?" He said, scooting farther onto the bed and lifting his foot up to take off his shoe. Eleven's face warmed and she looked away. She didn't want to think about that. Not with Max here.

"Woah, what? Shattered?" Speak of the devil. Max was looking

severely concerned now.

"When she defeated the Demogorgan. Like -" And then Lucas made a sound akin to glass breaking, and El bit her lip.

"You didn't tell me that part. What do you mean... shattered? She - you really broke into pieces?" Max was on the bed now, too, and was looking at Eleven expectantly.

"Shattered." The smaller girl said, looking down at her hands. She didn't feel well. All of a sudden she just really wanted all of her friends to leave. She wanted Mike and she needed to sleep. Or maybe to vomit. At this point, she couldn't really tell which. Will seemed to pick up on her unease, and he reached over from his chair and took her hand.

"You don't have to talk about it, El." He said softly. "Can we change subjects?"

Dustin frowned.

"But it was so *bada*s*," He tried, glancing first at Max then at Eleven. "And Max doesn't even know how cool it was. Will doesn't either, for that matter." Eleven frowned, and Dustin tried again. "What if - just hear me out - What if you didn't have to talk about it? What if - What if me and Lucas explain it." Dustin saw her unease. "Betcha we can make you laugh if we do."

Eleven supposed that was a little better, and, looking at the expectant faces around her, she nodded. Dustin grinned, exchanged a look with Lucas, and then stood.

"C'mon, buddy. Let's go backstage. You three, get on the bed. You're in for a treat."

Lucas and Dustin retreated into the hallway and closed the door, and Eleven leaned back against the headboard again as Will joined her and Max on the bed. He put a hand on her shoulder and offered a smile.

"You okay?" He said softly, and Eleven nodded. Max gave a sympathetic smile.

"Being sick sucks. I hope you get to feeling better." She said, almost reaching out to touch Eleven's leg but drawing back nervously. She still wasn't sure where Eleven stood when it came to her joining the party.

"Thank you." Eleven said, recalling the lesson on 'manners' Hopper had given her so many months ago. Say please and thank you. Excuse yourself if you need to leave a meal. Respect your elders. Eat with a fork (She was still working on that one).

Max smiled nervously to that, and then the door slammed open.

"Ladies and gentleman!" Dustin bellowed, throwing his hands out beside him in an overdramatic manner, "Put your hands together for the thrilling tale of, 'The Girl With No Hair Versus the Demon with No Heart!' Featuring our very own Lucas Sinclair-" Lucas stepped in then, taking a bow, "As Eleven and our very own me as the Demogorgan! Now, please, calm your applause and get ready for the once in a lifetime tale of a young girl conquering evil with nothing but her mind!"

Will was laughing and so was Max, but Eleven was confused. There was no applause, nor was this a 'once in a lifetime' tale. This had already happened once, and here it was happening again. Wasn't that two times? Dustin turned out the light before she could ask, leaving only the lamp light to illuminate the room.

And then they proceeded to act out exactly what had happened that fateful night at the school so long ago.

"And then the brave and courageous Dustin - I'm Dustin now, not the Demogorgan," Dustin clarified before lifting Lucas off of the ground, "Carried the weak and tired Eleven into a safe classroom!"

He threw Lucas unceremoniously onto the floor, and the boy in question made an 'oof' sound.

"And then - The Demogorgan burst through the door - KAPOW!" He continued, puffing up big with his cheeks and arms and walking in on his tiptoes. He screeched, a loud and horrendous yell as he did so, and moved towards Lucas on the floor.

Max was giggling, and so was Will.

Eleven was still confused. Was it okay to laugh at this? The play was bringing back some old memories that she would rather not relive, but seeing it like this ... Brushing past it, and trying to make it seem funny... was, in a weird way, kind of making the tension in her heart ease a little bit. She gave the tiniest smile and watched intently to the two boys in the middle of the room.

"And then Lucas was a dumba*s and tried to kill it with the Wrist-Rocket," Dustin paused to explain, and Lucas sat up a little on his elbows, an angry expression on his face.

"Not before Dustin screamed like a little girl!" He said, grinning.

Again, confusing. Screaming was appropriate in that situation, Eleven thought. But their smiles made her heart loosen even more, and so she remained quiet.

"And then - and then Eleven was up, and she was facing the Demogorgan, and she - she-"

Lucas stood then and made a horrible glaring face at Dustin. He tilted his chin towards his chest, and then Eleven jumped as Dustin began to writhe in pain.

"Oh, ahh! She's killing me!" He shouted, clutching his chest and falling to the ground. Lucas shuddered himself, and then both boys locked eyes, nodded and made a simultaneous crashing noise.

And El laughed.

It was sudden, unexpected. This moment had been so serious - so influential to her life. She had almost *died*. And yet, here she was, laughing at the funny sound effects her friends made, like it was nothing. For some weird unknown reason, laughing at it made it feel less real.

Well, real wasn't quite the word for it. It made it feel less...Scary. Like maybe she could move past it, and maybe she could think about it - think about the terrible feeling and the terrifying moments and losing her friends - without crying, because now she had them back.

And now they were trying to make her feel better by putting on a show to show how '*bada*s*' she was. To make her *laugh*.

And so she did. She laughed and laughed until her stomach hurt, and the others in the room laughed, too - simply because they had never, ever heard El laugh that much before. They'd barely heard more than a chuckle.

And Dustin cheered, because he had accomplished what he had meant to, and Max whooped because she finally knew what had happened, and Will grinned and grabbed El's hand and squeezed, just to make sure she was alright.

And then Mike burst into the door, looking excited and then shocked, because Max had her arm around El, and Will was holding her hand, and Lucas and Dustin were sprawled in the floor, their limbs at odd, odd angles that couldn't be comfortable, and they were straight up *cackling*.

"What- What the *he*l*," Mike said, eyes widening and body rigid. Confused.

El stopped laughing faster than he could stop for breath. "Mike!" She nearly shrieked, forgetting how weak and ill she still was and scrambling to get out bed.

She wavered as soon as she did so, but that was okay, because Mike met her halfway and greeted her in a strong embrace.

Eleven's head ached from moving, and her muscles felt as if she had just run a marathon, but she didn't care because she was breathing in Mike's amazing scent of old garage and Christmas spices, and he had his face nestled into her hair and was hugging her so tightly she thought she may burst.

"I missed you," He said to her hair.

"Missed you," She repeated, breathing in deep.

"Uhm, excuse me, love birds," Lucas said from his place on the ground. "How was the show?"

Dustin sat up quickly, grinning from ear to ear. His partial denture had fallen out in his great death scene, but he could hardly care. "Told you you'd laugh!"

Eleven looked up at Mike at this, and seeing his confused look only made the weak girl begin to giggle again.

"What..?" Mike tried, looking from Max to Lucas and Dustin to Eleven to Will back to Eleven.

"Play," Eleven said softly between raspy giggles. "It was..." She paused. "Cool."